

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed October 10, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further prosecution of the application, each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 4, 6-61, 63-116, 120, 122-120, 123-178, 180-226 and 228-234 were previously pending in this application. In this response, claims 35, 46-48, 75, 151 and 163-165 have been amended. Claims 83 and 200 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that in item 4 on page 8 of the Office Action, claims 4, 6-34, 120, 122-150, 109-116, 226 and 228-234 have been allowed.

Applicants also note with appreciation that in item 9 on page 12 of the Office Action, claims 6-14, 27-34, 40-61, 63-72, 75-82, 90, 94-104, 122-130, 143-150, 156-178, 180-189, 192-199, 207 and 211-211 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, while not acceding to the propriety of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Applicants have amended independent claims 35 and 151 so as to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner and further prosecution toward allowance.

Claim 35 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 83, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Claim 83 has been cancelled.

Claim 151 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 200, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Claim 200 has been canceled.

Claims 46, 75, and 163 have been rewritten in independent form so as to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner and further prosecution toward allowance

Applicants reserve the right to file one or more applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

B. Claim Rejections

The Office Action rejected claims 35-39, 73-74, 83-89, 91-93, 105-108, 131-142, 151-155, 190-191, 200-206, 208-210 and 222-225 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,057,981) in view of Duarte (U.S. Patent No. 5,559,681). These rejections are rendered moot by the amendments herein.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment set forth in the Office Action does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Furthermore, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify any concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' representative at the telephone number indicated below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Dated: February 9, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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